

LOMAX A.M.E. ZION CHURCH was organized on June 12, 1866, in Freedom's Village located in Arlington Heights, which is now Arlington National Cemetery. During the Civil War, Negroes migrated to Washington from Maryland and Virginia in such great numbers that the U.S. Government made provisions for housing and security. General Robert E. Lee forfeited the land to the Federal Government and, by order of Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, set aside this land as home for "freedmen." Many of our forefathers became self-sufficient by securing jobs as barbers, teamsters, servants, and farmers.

A handful of stalwart Christians organized Wesley Zion Church under the leadership of Reverend Richard Thompkins. The following persons were charter members of the church organization: Peter H. Jackson and William Marshall, Local Preachers; Elious Plummer, Henry Swanigan, Isaac Wood, Daniel Hogan, Trustees; David Boyd, Class Leader, William Springsteen Secretary; and John Wells, Cornelius Young, Thomas Simms, Nicholas Snow, Henry Jackson, Mary Young, Eliza Hogan, Eliza Boyd, Rebecca Plummer, Mrs. Smith, Jane Oskins, and Eliza Thomas.

For some time, the congregation worshipped in Freedmen's Village, until they began to scatter to other locations. Many settled in this part of the country, which was known as Camp Distribution and later as Convalescent Camp. Prayer meetings and regular services were held in the homes of Mrs. Ann Jones and Mr. Henson Thompson, until Mrs. Jones made available to them a small frame building on her property, and the first church home was established, in which Miss V. Thompkins (daughter of Reverend Richard Thompkins) taught school. In 1884, the congregation led by Reverend Granderson Mitchell, purchased land for a permanent home. This present site was selected by the late Wallace Boswell, whose honored remains now rest in a hollowed spot at the front of this church. Mr. Boswell was affectionately called "neighbor" by the members of this community.

On August 8, 1874, the first payment of \$5.00 (provided by Reverend L. Granderson Mitchell and Mrs. Julia Swanigan) was paid on this property toward the purchase price of \$75.00. The last payment was made on February 29, 1876. At that time, the church was called Little Zion A.M.E. Zion Church.

Reverend Granderson Mitchell was followed in succession by Reverend J. Watters, R.R. Johns, A.J. Hollard, J. Saunders, and A.C. Washington, C.C. Perkins, T.G. Campbell, M.M. Bell, W.R. Wright, G. Bosley, T. Jenkins, B.H. Freeman, W.R. Smith, L. Clayton, W.L. Holland, A. Washington, A. Hannam, W. Alexander, J. Green, C. Madox, J.A. Jones, J. Lee, A. Day, N.H. Williams, J. A. Rusell, J. Swann, R. Nelson, C. Wye, and S.S. Swann.

In 1887, the cornerstone was laid for the second chapel under the leadership of Reverend J.S. Waters. Mr. Tibbit Allen Chairman of the Board of Trustees. The building was completed in 1889 and was called Lomax Chapel of the A.M.E. Zion Church. The church continued to grow spiritually, financially, and in membership. Lomax Chapel was the center of all interests in the community.

Reverend Waters was succeeded by Reverend William Fierce, who was succeeded by Reverend Killingsworth.

During the pastorate of Reverend F .R. Killingsworth, the congregation built another structure, this time a brick edifice. On October 29, 1922, the cornerstone, a gift from Dr. Laura A. Killingsworth, wife of the pastor, was laid. It was mainly through the efforts of the members of the Board of Trustees, men of sterling qualities, that this building became a reality. The following individuals were members of this board: S.H. Thompson, Chairman; Thomas H. West; Charles E. Offutt; Leonard L. Gray; James Carter; James L. Boswell; Alexander Saunders; Edward C. Hoffman, Charles C. Ward; and Wallace Boswell.

The following trustees gave \$500 each towards the building of this church: S.H. Thompson, L.L. Gray, T.H. West, and C.E. Offutt. The other trustees and members made large contributions, as attested by the fact that though the building cost \$29,000 to erect, the remaining balance was only \$10,000 when the building was occupied. The trustees, under the leadership of Mr. Thompson, maneuvered to get the building in the Fairfax Building and Loan Association. The money for this transaction was donated by the Silent Service Club.

Reverend William H. Taylor followed Revered Killingsworth. During Reverend Taylor's pastorate, much of the debt of the new building was paid. Reverend Taylor organized the all-Black ministers in the community for a union revival. The revival began at Macedonia Church, and then traveled to each church for services for one week, culminating at Lomax. The growth of the church continued under the leadership of Reverends J.L. White and W.W. Howard.

The progressive history of the church was interrupted by fire in 1931. In this tragedy, a pipe organ was destroyed and the auditorium was greatly damaged. The progress of the church continued under the ministry of Reverend J.J. Robinson.

In 1933, Dr. Henry J. Callis was appointed as the minister of Lomax. Under his dynamic leadership, the total program of the church was strengthened and expanded. His first venture was to lead the church in liquidating the indebtedness in the fall of 1941. Under his leadership, modern sanitation was installed, and a program of renovation begun. A Hammond electric organ was purchased through the progressive efforts and leadership of Miss Marguerite Y. West. Mrs. Dessie Bullock envisioned the beautification of the cemetery adjacent the church. Through her leadership, the cemetery was cleared and beautified. Mrs. Marion Hightower proposed the idea of purchasing a piano and through her forthright efforts and creative ingenuity, this task was also accomplished. The land that now holds the parking lot was also purchased. During the 15-year tenure of Dr. Callis Lomax, his methodical mind and theological training contributed immensely to the church and to the community. Dr. Callis was also the first Black minister to join the Interracial Interdenominational Council of Ministers.

The chimes on the church were donated by the Callis family in the memory of Reverend J. Henry Callis and Mrs. Nellie Callis for their 12 years of service from 1934 to 1946. The chimes were dedicated on March 31, 1976. The songs heard on the chimes were recorded by Mrs. Juanita Boger. Each time the chimes are heard, it is a reminder of the faithful service rendered to the glory of God in Lomax A.M.E. Zion Church by Reverend and Mrs. Callis and Mrs. Juanita Boger.

In May 1946, Reverend Thomas O. Diggs was assigned to Lomax. During his tenure, the church succeeded in completing the work of renovation at a cost of approximately \$12,000, which included a dual heating system, new pulpit, new kitchen, pastor's study, and the sanctuary. During his pastorate, Mrs. Katie Woods presented to the church candelabra, a cross, and vases for the altar.

Reverend Jackson A. Browne was appointed minister of Lomax in 1948. There were two outstanding contributions that characterized his administration: 1. The old parsonage was razed and a new and larger one erected and paid for at a cost of \$17,500; and 2. A building fund was set up for the construction of an education center. The membership was increased and numerous organizations were created. Reverend Browne was noted for his pastoral ability and was affectionately called the "singing preacher." He was also elected President of the Interracial Interdenominational Council of Ministers of Arlington County. Through his leadership, the first Deaconess Board was organized at Lomax. Reverends W.A.C. Kelly and F. Claude Spurgeon, respectively, followed Reverend Browne, and each made his contribution to the church.

In the fall of 1956, Reverend Henry Hampton Sink was appointed pastor of Lomax. He, in a very dedicated manner, endeared himself to the hearts and lives of not only the members of Lomax but also the people of the community. His painstaking interest and Godly counsel added greatly toward an awakening awareness of our need for a fuller commitment of the cause of Christ. Dr. Sink was called from the pastorate of this church to the position of Presiding Elder of the Washington District of the Philadelphia and Baltimore Conference.

In July 1960, Reverend Arthur W. Walls, Sr., became the pastor of Lomax. During his pastorate, the congregation achieved the following: redecoration of the church and parsonage; the purchasing of equipment for a complete kitchen; reorganization of the financial structure of the church; and the purchase of additional land. The property on which the education building now stands was acquired through the efforts of George W. Bullock, Jr. He had the foresight to hold an option on the land until the church members were ready to make the purchase. The highlight of his administration was the dedication of the Education Center on December 4, 1966. This center became a realization during the centennial year of the church and consisted of 22 rooms at a cost of \$135,000. For nine years the church offered space for a day care services to the residents of the surrounding community.

It was under the pastorate of Reverend Walls that the Christian Education Department was instituted in 1962, with Mrs. Lillian M. Thompson as Director.

During the pastorate of Reverend Walls, Mrs. Mamie Cannon organized the first Gospel Chorus of Lomax Church. Among the many contributions this group made to the church was the purchase of a new organ.

Reverend Walls a political activist, participated in the March on Washington held in 1963. The church fed and housed a busload of people for one day and night. During this time, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered a speech on the church parking lot. Reverend Walls also led voter registration drives in Arlington, Virginia, and ran for the Virginia House of Delegates in 1972.

In May 1976, Bishop T.H. Lomax was elected Bishop and assigned to this district, and it was then that the membership renamed the church Lomax A.M.E. Zion Church. The first building erected on this site was taken down in Freedmen's Village and rebuilt here. It was crude one-room framed building made of 12 inch boards. For approximately one year, the congregation worshipped in this building on Sunday and held prayer and business meetings. Public school was held during the weekdays and during the evening hours.

In 1976, Reverend William M. Patterson became the minister of the Lomax congregation. Reverend Patterson was successful in seeking to strengthen the Christian nurture and evangelism.

In 1981, Reverend Louis Hunter, Sr., came to Lomax with his wife, Delores, and three sons. A dynamic and effective leader, he brought to Lomax creative and innovative ideas. Under this pastorate, Arleas Kea was appointed the first female Preacher Steward in the history of Lomax. In keeping with God's word, Reverend Hunter promoted tithing and sacrificial giving, de-emphasizing fundraising projects. Reverend Hunter's wife, Delores, who was loved by the congregation, passed away after a serious illness. In honor of her memory, our chapel bears her name. Reverend Hunter pastored Lomax until 1989 when he was appointed pastor of Big Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

In June 1989, Dr. Cameron W. Jackson was appointed as the Pastor of Lomax. He was accompanied by his wife, Margaret, and four sons. As the son and grandson of ministers and the father of a dynamic young minister, Dr. Jackson brought to Lomax a deep heritage wrought in the ministry. Steeped in the A.M.E. Zion tradition, he brought a level of spirituality that soon affected the congregation and community. A man of vision, it is notable that Dr. Jackson continued to promote tithing and sacrificial giving which was started under Reverend Hunter. His tireless efforts resulted in the budget being balanced for the first time in modern history. As a pastoral tradition, Dr. Jackson became very active in the community affairs of Arlington County.

Under Dr. Jackson's leadership, Lomax experienced a tremendous growth in spirituality. His innovative ideas also led to the upgrading and modernization of the administrative policies of the Church. Some outreach ministries that were started during his tenure were: The Young Adult Missionary Society (YAMS); The Young Woman's Department (Y's); The Achievement, Integrity, and Motivation Project (AIM), Junior Creative Workshop, the resurrection of the Youth Church, and the creation of the Youth Bible Study. The church also experienced tremendous growth in the Life Members Council and the Lay Council.

During the tenure of Dr. Jackson, the church was able to completely modernize the sound department throughout the sanctuary. In addition, the church purchased the Boswell Property directly across the street for future use and solicited funds from the federal, state, and local governments to build a high-rise apartment building in the back parking lot of the church.

The leadership of Dr. Jackson and his spiritual outlook for the future provided the necessary tools to ensure that Lomax would continue to be a church on the move.

In October of 1994, Reverend Joseph E. Lamb, Sr., was assigned to the Lomax church. During his tenure, he concentrated on leading the church under the theme of, "Empowered to Build Towards Excellence: Spiritually, Financially, and Physically." He worked diligently to lay the foundation to alleviate our heavy financial debt. In addition, it was under his tenure that the project of immunization of young children was started in cooperation with the National Council of Churches and the county health department. Also, as a result of the experiences in a Vacation Bible School class, the idea of ministering to the married couples grew to a Sunday School class, and continues today as a couples ministry in the church. Reverend Lamb left Lomax in October, 1996 when he was appointed the pastor of Trinity A.M.E. Zion Church, Washington, DC to replace their pastor Reverend Richard K. Thompson, who had been elected bishop at the General Conference that year.

In October 1996, Reverend Dr. Gary W. Burns became the minister of Lomax, and continued to lead the church under the theme of "Doing It God's Way, All The Way." Reverend Burns brought a very animated form of evangelism to our church. A number of exciting initiatives were instituted at Lomax during his tenure, including: the Lomax Bible Institute which offered in-depth studies of the Bible; and classes focusing on the Church discipline; the Acolytes Program; an active Seniors Ministry serving the church and the community; a food pantry; a mentoring initiative for girls ages 8-18; an annual, community wide observance on Memorial Day; a month-long focus on Stewardship and an adult dance ministry. In addition to many programmatic enhancements, the physical plant of Lomax was substantially improved with a renovated kitchen, new carpet and paint in the sanctuary, purchase of a grand piano and a 25-passenger bus. Also, under Reverend Burns' leadership, great strides have been made in upgrading the physical facilities of the church due to the improved financial situation. The church was able to sell the house left to the church by Miss Annette Johnson and the Boswell property, which had been purchased in the early 90's. These transactions allowed for numerous improvements to the church, namely, painting of the sanctuary; installation of new floor and carpeting in the sanctuary; installation of new ceiling, floor, lights, and window blinds in the fellowship hall and lower level of the education building; installation of a new roof; refurbishing of the women's bathroom in the fellowship hall and the children's bathroom used by the nursery; renovation of the Trustee and Steward rooms; installation of the sump pump; repaving of the parking lot and the installation of lights there; installation of new carpeting and railing on the front entrance; purchase of new refrigerator and freezer; refurbishing of the parking lot entrance to the education building. Additionally, a cornerstone commemorating the board of trustees in office when the building was built, was installed and dedicated. During the pastorate of Reverend Burns, Lomax became a member of the Potomac District of the Philadelphia-Baltimore Conference under a restructuring of the conference.

Dr. Burns was appointed to serve as the Presiding Elder of the newly formed Northern Virginia District at the 176th Annual Session of the Philadelphia and Baltimore Annual Conference (Mid-Atlantic II Episcopal District) in May, 2005. In addition, he served on the conference Finance Committee and the board of the Brotherhood Pension Society of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Informally, Dr. Burns served as mentor, counselor and coach to scores of preachers and pastors. He willingly spends considerable time helping young preachers learn to "do the right thing the right way!"

Reverend Fredrick B. Massey, Sr. was assigned to the Lomax A.M.E. Zion Church. He brought to Lomax an Afrocentric approach to studying God's Holy Word. Reverend Massey taught a weekly Hebrew class as well as weekly Bible study classes at 11:00 A.M. and 7.00 P.M. on Wednesdays and a monthly Black History class. The following projects were implemented under his tenure, the purchase of a new air conditioning system for the church; implementation and dedication of the Pew Plate Legacy Concept; the renovation of the Lomax Parsonage and the very successful State Rally representing the membership of 15 States, the District of Columbia, and Barbados. It is important to note that Reverend Massey also served as the Presiding Elder of the Northern Virginia District.

Reverend Samuel W. Whittaker was appointed to the Lomax A.M.E. Zion Church in June 2014 embracing more love and much emphasis placed on spirituality and discipleship. Under his leadership, Reverend Whittaker introduced technology into our service with the purchase and installation monitors for the Sanctuary. The Men's Choir has been reestablished. He has made a concerted effort to reach out to the neighborhood to increase our membership and visibility in the community. Also during his tenure, Lomax replaced the roof on the Education Building and paid off the Handicapped Ramp in July 2015 which leaves Lomax debit free. "To God be the Glory for the things he has done."